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Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-
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Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020

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Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020

INTRODUCTION

Road safety is a major societal issue. In 2009, more than 35,000 people died on the roads of the European Union, i.e. the equivalent of a medium town, and no fewer than 1,500,000 persons were injured. The cost for society is huge, representing approximately 130 billion Euro in 2009¹.

In its Communication "Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"², the Commission has underlined the importance for Europe of social cohesion, a greener economy, education and innovation. These objectives should be reflected in the various aspects of European transport policy which should aim at ensuring sustainable mobility for all citizens, "decarbonising" transport and make full use of technological progress. Road safety will play an important role in the upcoming White Paper on transport policy 2010 – 2020, as lowering the number of road users' casualties is key to improving the overall performance of the transport system and to meet citizens' and companies' needs and expectations.

A coherent holistic and integrated approach is therefore needed, taking into account synergies with other policy goals. Road safety policies at local, national, European or international level should integrate relevant objectives of other public policies and vice versa.

The proposed policy orientations takes fully account of the results obtained during the 3rd road safety action programme 2001-2010, showing that in spite of important progress made on road safety, efforts needed to be continued and further strengthened.

The European road safety policy orientations up to 2020 aims to provide a general governance framework and challenging objectives which should guide national or local strategies. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, actions described should be implemented at the most appropriate level and through the most appropriate means.

In the framework of these policy orientations, the Commission considers that the three following actions should be undertaken as a priority:

- the establishment of a structured and coherent cooperation framework which draws on best practices across the Member States, as a necessary condition to implement in an effective manner the road safety policy orientations 2011-2020,

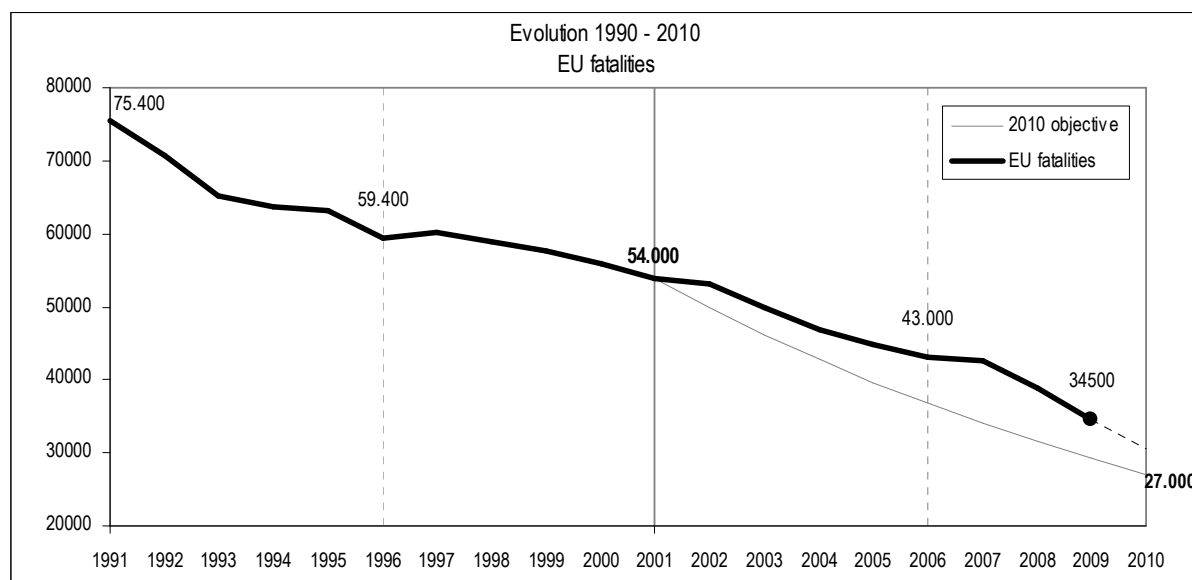
¹ Based on the value of a statistical life calculated by the HEATCO study (6th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development).

² COM(2010) 2020.

- a strategy for injuries and first aid to address the urgent and growing need to reduce the number of road injuries,
- the improvement of the safety of vulnerable road users, in particular motorcyclists for whom accidents statistics are particularly worrying.

2. EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE THIRD EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY ACTION PROGRAMME

On 2 June 2003, the Commission adopted its 3rd European action programme for road safety (RSAP), including an ambitious target to halve the number of road deaths by 2010 as well as 62 proposals for concrete actions in the field of vehicle safety, safety of infrastructure and users' safety. An ex-post evaluation has been carried out in order to analyse the impact, the level of implementation and the effectiveness of the RSAP (document available on the website: <http://ec.europa.eu/roadsafety>). Although the initial target is not likely to be met by the end of 2010, the RSAP has been a strong catalyst of efforts made by Member States to improve road safety.



3. PRINCIPLES AND TARGET

3.1. Principles

Striving for the highest road safety standards throughout Europe

Road safety policy has to put citizens at the heart of its action: it has to encourage them to take primary responsibility for their safety and the safety of others. The road safety policy of the EU aims at raising the level of road safety, ensuring safe and clean mobility for citizens everywhere in Europe. It should foster equity among road users through focused efforts to improve the safety of more vulnerable road users.

An integrated approach to road safety

The future road safety policy should be taken into account in other policy fields of the EU, and it should take the objectives of these other policies into account. Road safety has close links with policies on energy, environment, employment, education, youth, public health, research, innovation and technology, justice, insurance³, trade and foreign affairs, among others.

Subsidiarity, proportionality and shared responsibility

The question of governance is essential: in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, which in road safety are embodied in the concept of shared responsibility, commitment and concrete actions, as appropriate, will be required at the level of the European authorities, the Member States, regional and local bodies and the actors in civil society, each in their areas of responsibility. The European Road Safety Charter is a good example of commitments taken by the relevant actors.

3.2. Target

In view of achieving the objective of creating a common road safety area, the Commission proposes to continue with the target of **halving the overall number of road deaths in the European Union by 2020** starting from 2010⁴. Such a common target represents a significant increase of the level of ambition compared to the unmet target of the current RSAP, considering the progress already achieved by several Member States during the past decade, which will give a clear signal of Europe's commitment towards road safety.

Member States are encouraged to contribute, through their national road safety strategy, to the achievement of the common objective, taking into account their specific starting points, needs and circumstances. They should concentrate their efforts on areas where their performance is the lowest, using as an indicator the results obtained by the best performers in such areas. Specific national objectives could thus be established, for example by laying down the objective of not exceeding a given number of road deaths per million inhabitants. This approach should reduce the disparities between Member States and provide citizens with a more uniform level of road safety within the EU.

As regards the establishment of a target for reducing road traffic severe injuries, which has been proposed during the public consultation⁵, the Commission considers it to be an interesting suggestion. At this stage a European target is not possible, due to the lack of a common definition of severe and minor injuries. As soon as sufficient progress has been made in this area, the Commission will propose to add a common "injuries reduction target" to the European road safety policy orientations up to 2020.

³ The insurance sector can contribute to road safety through training actions as well as insurance policies. For instance, Pay-As-You-Drive (PAYD) schemes where the premium varies with the amount of kilometres driven could lead to substantial savings on accident costs as well as a reduction in CO2 emissions from cars.

⁴ The results for 2010 not being known yet, this reference will be based on projections of the figures available in 2009.

⁵ A public consultation for the preparation of the next road safety policy orientations took place between July and December 2009. It comprised a series of thematic workshops, an internet consultation and a stakeholder conference. Approximately 550 replies were received during through Internet or written contributions.

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The road user is the first link in the road safety chain. Whatever the technical measures in place, the effectiveness of a road safety policy depends ultimately on the users' behaviour. For this reason, **education, training and enforcement** are essential. However, the road safety system also has to take into account human error and inappropriate behaviour and correct it as much as possible — zero risk does not exist. All components, in particular **vehicles** and **infrastructure**, should therefore be 'forgiving', so as to prevent and limit the consequences of these failures for the users, in particular the most vulnerable users.

Seven objectives have been identified for the next decade. For each of these objectives, actions at EU and national level will be proposed. The Commission will ensure continuity with the 3rd RSAP, notably where the ex-post evaluation identified actions to be continued.

Objective n°1: Improve education and training of road users
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During the 3rd RSAP, important legislation has been put in place as regards driving licences and training of professional drivers. The impact of such recent measures will be measured in the years to come. However, the need to improve the quality of the licensing and training system, with a special focus on young novice drivers, was stressed during the experts' and public consultation.

The current approach as regards driver training remains indeed too fragmented and specialised. The Commission proposes to promote a wider approach and view education and training as an overall process, a lifelong 'educational continuum'. Interactive methods and the acquisition of autonomy should be encouraged, while taking duly into account the need to keep the cost of the licence at a reasonable level.

- **Pre-test learning**

The objective is to encourage practice before the test under maximum conditions of safety. The Commission will reflect on several options, in particular the inclusion of accompanied driving in the process leading to the issuing of the licence. The introduction of harmonised minimum requirements will be examined for persons involved in learning: such as accompanying persons and instructors.

- **The driving licence test**

The driving licence test should not be restricted to checking the candidate's knowledge of the highway code or his ability to carry out manoeuvres. The Commission will consider how to also include broader driving skills, or even an evaluation of values and behaviour related to road safety (awareness of the risks) and defensive, energy-efficient driving (reinforcement of the key elements of eco-driving within the curricula of the theoretical and practical tests).

- **Post-licence training**

Post-licence continuous training for non-professional drivers deserves to be examined, in particular since, with the European population ageing, the question of maintaining older people's aptitude for driving will become increasingly relevant. Possible actions in this area will have to take into account persons with disabilities and elderly people's right to mobility and the adoption of alternative solutions.

Action:

The Commission will work, in cooperation with Member States as appropriate, on the development of a common educational and training road safety strategy including notably the integration of apprenticeship in the ‘pre-licensing’ process as well as common minimum requirements for driving instructors.

Objective n°2: Increase enforcement of road rules

According to the ex-post evaluation of the 3rd RSAP, enforcement remains a key factor in creating the conditions for a considerable reduction in the number of deaths and injuries, especially when it is intensively applied and widely publicised. Public consultation also confirmed that enforcement should be strongly present in the new road safety policy orientations. The full potential of a European enforcement strategy was indeed not reached during the previous programme, in particular with the lack of progress on the Commission's proposal concerning cross-border enforcement.

Such a strategy should be built on the following axes:

- **Cross-border exchange of information in the field of road safety**

The work initiated in 2008 on the proposal for a Directive facilitating enforcement in the field of road safety should continue. With the aim to facilitate the exchange of information on road safety offences, the proposed text⁶ is a step towards a more equal treatment of offenders.

- **Enforcement campaigns**

Increased coordination and sharing of best practices help make enforcement and controls significantly more efficient. The principle of the targeted control campaigns already organised in and between several Member States should be encouraged and generalised. In addition, the experience shows that the most effective results are obtained by combining control policy with users' information. The Commission will therefore continue to support information actions and awareness-raising, in particular for young people.

- **Vehicle technology to assist enforcement**

Technological developments, such as in-vehicle systems providing real-time information on prevailing speed limits could contribute to improve speed enforcement. Since light commercial vehicles are becoming increasingly numerous on the roads, which also increase the risk that they get involved in accidents, the fitting of speed limiters on such vehicles should also be examined along the lines already identified by the Commission⁷, taking into account also the environmental and climate co-benefits. With respect to drink-driving, penalties should be accompanied by preventive measures. Thus the Commission will examine to what extent measures are appropriate for making the installation of alcohol interlock devices in vehicles compulsory, for example with respect to professional transport (e.g. school buses).

⁶ Taking into account the relevant EU legislation on protection of personal data.

⁷ COM(2009) 593 final.

- **National enforcement objectives**

The effectiveness of road safety policies is largely dependent on the intensity of controls on compliance with safety requirements. The Commission encourages setting national control objectives, to be integrated into ‘national enforcement plans’⁸.

Actions:

- *The Commission will work together with the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of a cross-border exchange of information in the field of road safety.*
- *The Commission will work towards developing a common road safety enforcement strategy, including:*
 1. *The possibility of introducing speed limiters in light commercial vehicles and of making use of alcohol interlock devices obligatory in certain specific cases.*
 2. *The establishment of national implementation plans.*

Objective n°3: Safer road infrastructure

The highest number of fatalities occurs on rural and urban roads (56% and 44% respectively in 2008, compared to 6% on motorways). Therefore, ways should be found for gradually extending the relevant principles of safe management of infrastructure to the secondary road network of the Member States, taking into account the principle of subsidiarity.

The Commission will ensure that requests for funding from the EU funds related to road infrastructure within Member States incorporate safety requirements. An extension of this principle to external aid will be explored.

Actions:

The Commission will:

1. *Ensure that European funds will only be granted to infrastructure compliant with the road safety and tunnel safety Directives.*
2. *Promote the application of the relevant principles on infrastructure safety management to secondary roads of Member States, in particular through the exchange of best practices.*

Objective n° 4: Safer vehicles

The period covered by the 3rd RSAP has seen considerable progress in vehicle safety. Although the safety of cars has been boosted, thanks partly to the wide use of passive safety devices such as seatbelts and airbags and the implementation of electronic safety systems,

⁸ See Commission Recommendation 2004/345/EC on enforcement in the field of road safety (OJ L 111, 17.4.2004, p. 75).

other vehicles, in particular motorcycles, have not been subject to the same attention. Moreover, new safety problems will need to be addressed in the years to come to take into account the increasing part of vehicles using an alternative power train.

- **Vehicles of today**

Numerous technical standards and requirements on vehicle safety have been adopted in recent years or are under preparation⁹. Their impact will only be fully visible in the decade to come.

After being placed on the market, vehicles should continue to meet safety standards throughout their lifetime. The Commission will evaluate and propose, as appropriate following an impact assessment, actions in the area of harmonisation and progressive strengthening of EU legislation on roadworthiness tests¹⁰ and on technical roadside inspections¹¹. The ultimate objective could be to arrive at a mutual recognition of vehicle inspections between Member States.

Currently vehicle data (type approval, registration, results of inspections, etc.) exist in a disparate form in each Member State. The Commission will study the setting up of a European electronic platform with a view to facilitating the exchange of this information.

- **Vehicles of tomorrow**

As set out in the Communication of the Commission on "A European strategy on clean and energy efficient vehicles"¹², the development and deployment of alternative powertrain vehicles constitutes a major priority for the decade to come in order to reduce the environmental impact of road transport. However, some of these vehicles have characteristics which make them radically different from traditional vehicles and which may have an impact on safety. An integrated and coordinated approach is therefore essential with a view to clearly identifying the impact on all factors concerned (such as infrastructure and vulnerable users) and the solutions to be supplied (research, standardisation, etc.).

A significant contribution to road safety is also expected from the deployment of so called "co-operative systems", where vehicles exchange data and interact with the infrastructure and other surrounding vehicles to have drivers optimally informed, reducing risks on accidents and making traffic flows run more smoothly overall.

Actions:

The Commission will:

1. ***Make proposals to encourage progress on the active and passive safety of vehicles, such as motorcycles and electric vehicles.***
2. ***Make proposals in view of the progressive harmonisation and strengthening of roadworthiness tests and technical roadside inspections.***

⁹ For instance, the safety of motorcycles will be addressed through a proposal for a Regulation on the approval of Two- and Three-Wheelers and Quadricycles.

¹⁰ OJ L 141, 6.6.2009, p.12.

¹¹ OJ L 203, 10.8.2000, p. 1.

¹² COM(2010) 186.

3. *Further assess the impact and benefits of co-operative systems to identify most beneficial applications and recommend the relevant measures for their synchronised deployment.*

Objective n° 5: Promote the use of modern technology to increase road safety

A number of studies and research activities on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) were carried out during the period covered by the 3rd RSAP. ITS have the potential to play a considerable role for the improvement of traffic safety, for example through the adoption of systems to detect incidents and supervise traffic that are able to provide information to road users in real time.

Within the framework of the implementation of the ITS Action Plan¹³ and of the proposed ITS Directive¹⁴, the Commission will notably propose technical specifications necessary to exchange data and information between vehicles (V2V), between vehicles and infrastructure (V2I) and between infrastructures (I2I). The possibility of extending the implementation of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Lane Departure Warning, Anti Collision Warning or Pedestrian Recognition systems by retrofitting them to existing commercial and/or private vehicles should also be further assessed. Accelerated deployment and broad market take-up of such safety enhancing applications needs to be supported in order for their full potential to be unleashed.

Within the next seven years, ITS should contribute decisively to improving the effectiveness and speed of rescue, and in particular the adoption of the pan-European emergency call service fitted to vehicles, eCall¹⁵. The impact and scope for extending the use of eCall should be examined, in particular with a view to improving rescue actions for motorcyclists, heavy duty vehicles and buses.

Finally, in spite of their positive contribution to road safety, the development of ITS, in particular in-vehicle systems and nomadic devices, raises a number of concerns from the safety point of view (distraction, impact on training, etc.) which will require further consideration.

Actions:

Within the context of the implementation of the ITS Action Plan and of the proposed ITS Directive, the Commission will cooperate with the Member States with a view to:

1. *Evaluate the feasibility of retrofitting commercial vehicles and private cars with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems.*
2. *Accelerate the deployment of e-Call and examine its extension to other vehicles.*

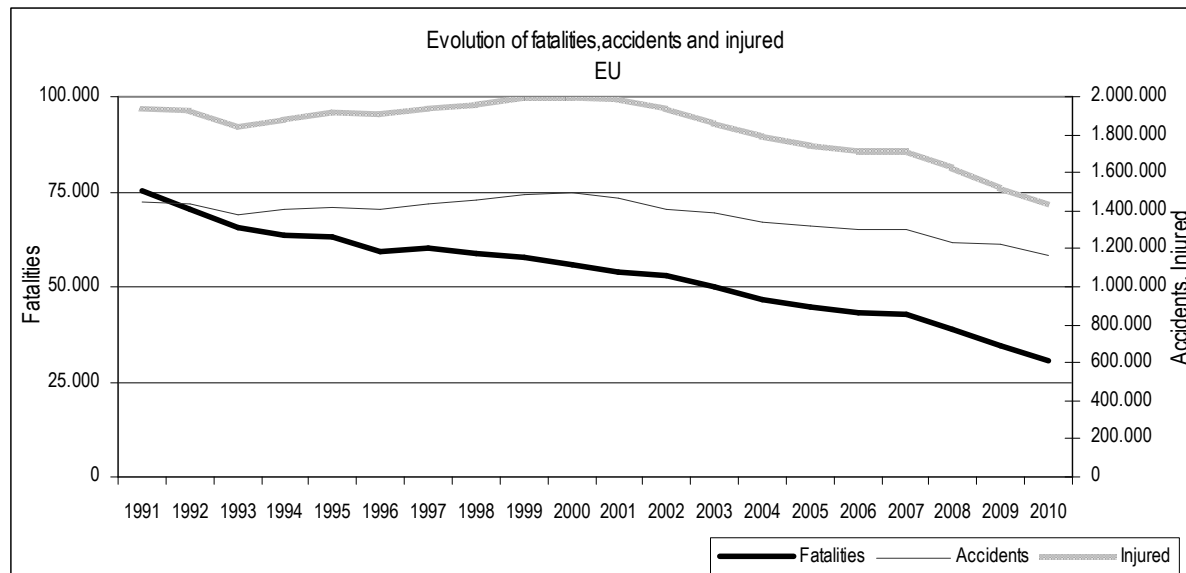
Objective n°6: Improve emergency and post-injuries services

¹³ COM(2008) 886.

¹⁴ COM(2008) 887.

¹⁵ See COM(2009) 434.

While the number of fatalities has decreased between 2001 and 2010, the number of injured people is still very high, as illustrated by the table below. As repeatedly stressed by the stakeholders during the public consultation, reducing the number of injuries should be one of the priority actions within Europe for the next decade. Road injuries have also been recognized as a major public health concern at international level, in particular by the World Health Organization¹⁶ and in the framework of the UN Decade for Action on road safety.



Reducing the seriousness of injuries from road accidents requires the introduction of a range of diverse actions, for example on the safety of the vehicle and of infrastructure, ITS, the availability of emergency aid, the speed and coordination of intervention, the efficiency of first aid and rehabilitation, etc.

Therefore, the Commission will develop the elements of a global strategy of action concerning road injuries and first aid, with the help of a Task Force bringing together the relevant actors, representatives of international and non-governmental organisations, government experts and the Commission.

Initially, it would seek to find a common understanding of definitions and concepts relating to casualties and to identify courses of action to improve prevention and intervention, including their socio-economic impact. On this basis, precise actions could be identified, such as exchange of good practices, development of intervention guides, a common approach to the definition of major and minor injuries, promotion of the creation of mixed rescue units between Member States, etc.

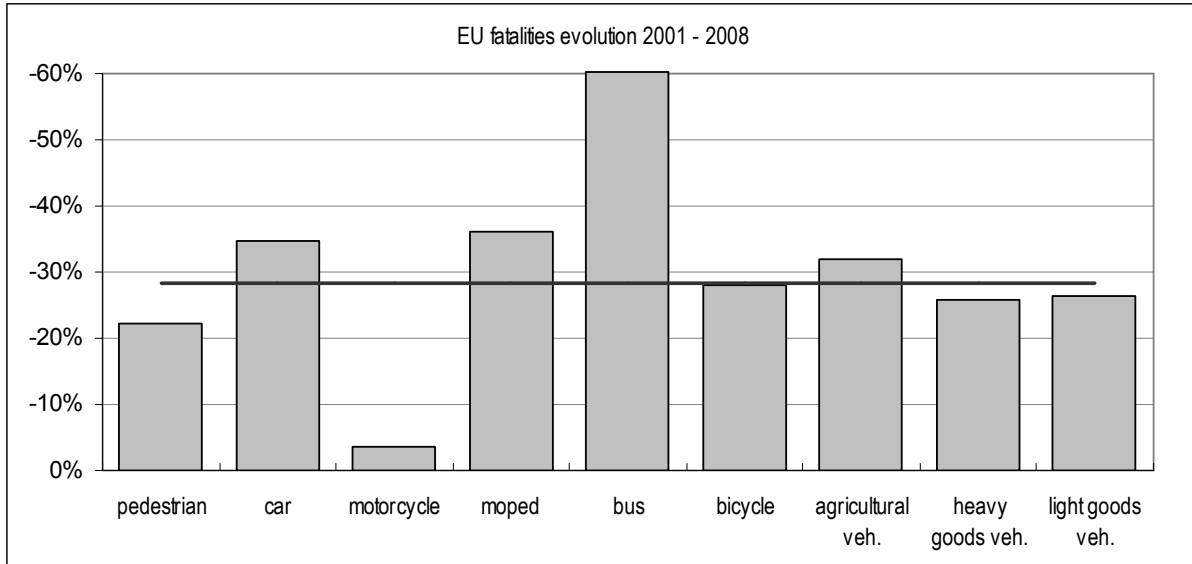
Action

In collaboration with Member States and other actors involved in road safety, the Commission will propose the setting-up of a global strategy of action on road injuries and first aid.

¹⁶ World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention, WHO, 2004.

Objective n°7: Protect vulnerable road users

The high number of fatalities and serious injuries faced by vulnerable road users such as riders of motorcycles, mopeds, cyclists and pedestrians are significant and in some European States still increasing. In 2008, they represented 45% of all road deaths and statistics (see graph below) show that they have been given insufficient attention until now.



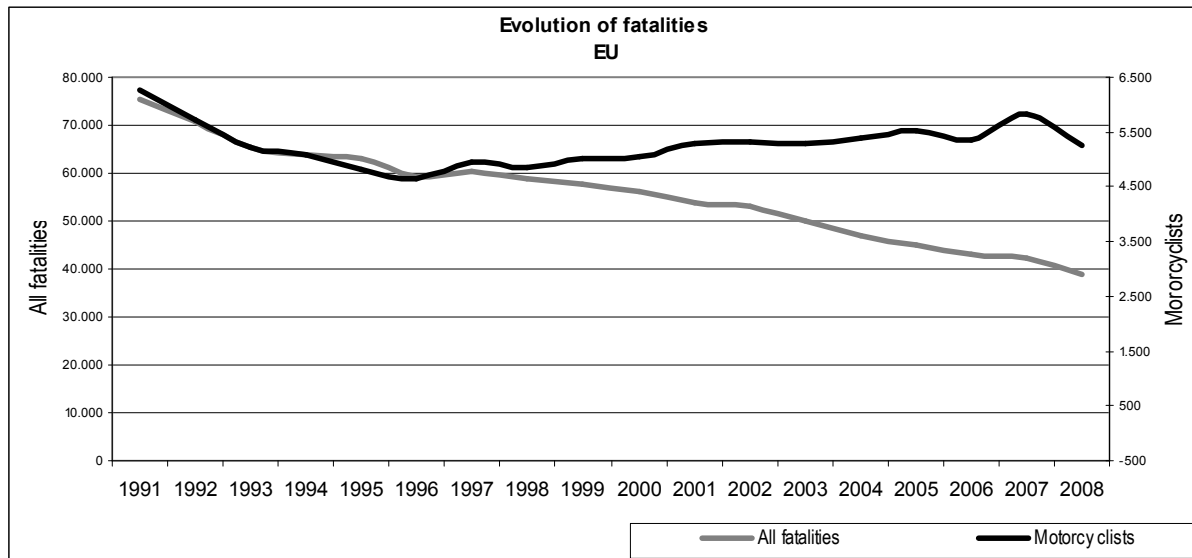
Further, other users present an intrinsic "fragility" (e.g. elderly, young children, the disabled), whatever their role in traffic (pedestrian, driver, passenger). Their vulnerability is particularly high in urban areas¹⁷.

- **Powered-two-wheelers (PTWs)**

This ever-growing group of users is the one where it is the most difficult to attain a significant reduction in accidents and fatalities. In particular, as shown by the graph below, the reduction rate of fatalities amongst motorcycle riders is lower than for other road users¹⁸.

¹⁷ People above 65 year-old counted in 2008 for 28% of road fatalities in urban areas.

¹⁸ For instance, between 2001 and 2008, the reduction rate of road deaths for PTWs was only 4% compared to 35% for car occupants and drivers.



The problem of motorcyclists' safety should be addressed through a range of actions, with a view to:

1. Improving awareness of PTW riders by other road users.
2. Encouraging research and technical developments aimed at increasing PTW's safety and reducing the consequences of accidents, such as standards for personal protective equipment, airbags, the use of relevant ITS applications (e.g. eCall) and progressive installation of advanced braking systems, appropriate anti-tampering measures, etc. The Commission will propose to extend to PTWs the existing EU legislation concerning roadworthiness testing. Finally, on-going efforts to better adapt road infrastructure to PTWs (e.g. safer guardrails) should also be continued.
3. Encouraging Member States to focus enforcement on speed, drink and driving, helmet use, tampering and riding without a proper PTW licence.

• **Pedestrians, cyclists**

In 2008, cyclists and pedestrians represented 27% of road deaths (47% in urban areas). For many potential cyclists, real or perceived road safety risks remain a decisive obstacle. National and local governments are increasingly involved in promoting cycling and walking, which will require that more and more attention is paid to road safety issues.

Since 2003, legislation has been introduced at EU level to reduce injury risks (e.g. energy absorbing car-front structures, advanced braking systems, blind-spot mirrors, etc.). Further actions will need to be examined (e.g. improved visibility, speed management, adequate infrastructure for non-motorised transport, separation of dangerous mixed traffic, etc). Since the problem is mainly related to urban management, most of the actions will have to be carried out at local level, in accordance with the Commission's Action Plan on Urban Mobility¹⁹. Given the significant environmental, climate, congestion and public health benefits of cycling, it merits reflection whether more could not be done in this area.

¹⁹ COM(2009) 490.

- **Elderly people and people with disabilities**

Elderly people represented 20% of road fatalities (40% as pedestrians) in 2008. Ageing of the population is putting an urgent emphasis on the need to assess older people's vulnerability in traffic. Also, persons with disabilities are at a significant risk. Knowledge is still very limited in this field and focused research efforts are needed, including on medical criteria for the assessment of fitness-to-drive.

Actions

- *The Commission will make appropriate proposals with a view to:*
 1. *Monitoring and further developing technical standards for the protection of vulnerable road users.*
 2. *Including powered-two wheelers in vehicle inspections.*
 3. *Increasing the safety of cycling and other vulnerable road users, e.g. by encouraging the establishment of adequate infrastructures.*
- *Member States should develop information, communication and dialogue between road users and with the competent authorities. The Commission will contribute to this effort.*

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY POLICY ORIENTATIONS 2011-2020

5.1 Improving the commitment of all parties concerned through stronger governance

- **Priority for implementation of the EU legislative acquis in the field of road safety**

With over a dozen legislative instruments on road safety, the EU *acquis* is essentially in place. The Commission intends to give priority to monitoring the full and correct implementation of the EU road safety *acquis* by Member States.

- **Setting-up an open cooperation framework between Member States and the Commission**

A structured framework for open cooperation between the Member States and the Commission should be set up to implement the EU road safety policy and to monitor the progress achieved. It would include:

- the development by Member States of national road safety plans. Such plans should describe the means to achieve the common objective, draw up a timetable and publicise details of the national plan. They could also include specific national objectives in accordance with their particular situation.
- close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States with a view to monitoring progress towards the common objective and to improving data collection, sharing experiences, twinning and exchanging best practices.

5.2 Common tools for monitoring and evaluating the efficiency of road safety policies

- **Improve monitoring through data collection and analysis**

Under a Council Decision of 1993²⁰, Member States have the obligation to communicate to the Commission data on road accidents resulting in death or injury that occur within their territories with a view to setting up a Community data bank, the CARE database.

The quality and comparability of CARE data are overall satisfactory, except for the comparability of data on the injured. Moreover, a great deal remains to be done concerning risk exposure and performance indicators.

The available European road safety data and knowledge have been integrated and made publicly available on the Internet through the European Road Safety Observatory (ERSO). Such an integrated tool is essential for monitoring the application of road safety policies, evaluating their impact and devising new initiatives. The Commission will therefore pursue the further development of ERSO, including actions on communication and on information of citizens on road safety issues.

- **Increase understanding of crashes and risks**

Technical investigations following an accident can bring a valuable return in terms of experience which is useful for the future development of safety in road transport. For air, rail and maritime transport, an EU framework requires the creation by Member States of independent technical investigation bodies.

The Commission will examine to what extent the principles and methods applied in the other modes of transport for technical investigations after accidents could be transposed to the field of road transport, taking into account the specific character of the latter.

The added value of developing and installing event data recorders ('black boxes'), in particular on professional vehicles, already mentioned in the 3rd RSAP, will be examined taking into account the socio-economic impact.

Actions:

- *The Commission will cooperate with the Member States with a view to:*

1. *Promoting twinnings and other modes of cooperation to increase the safety level of Member States.*
2. *Improving data collection and analysis as regards accidents and developing the role of the European Road Safety Observatory.*

- *The Commission will:*

3. *Closely monitor the correct implementation of the European acquis in the field of road safety.*

²⁰ JO L 329, 30.12.1993, p. 63

4. *Examine the need for common principles for technical road accident investigation.*

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed policy orientations constitute a plan of possible actions envisaged for the next decade. The actors concerned underlined, in particular during the consultation of stakeholders, the extent to which Europe, by giving a framework for action and ambitious objectives, has stimulated efforts at all levels and enabled the achievement of significant results.

The proposed policy orientations provides a general framework under which, at various European, national, regional or local levels concerned, concrete initiatives could be taken. Individual measures would be subject to proper impact assessment in line with established EU better regulation principles. The role of the Commission will be to make proposals on matters where the EU is competent and, in all other cases, to support initiatives taken at various levels, to encourage the exchange of information, to identify and promote the best results obtained and to follow carefully the progress achieved.